

constitution modeled on that of the United States.

However, independence did not spell the end of Liberia's close historical links with the United States. American companies, such as the Firestone Rubber and Tire Company, have played an important role in shaping the Liberian economy. Liberia has been an important political ally of the United States. During the two World Wars, the republic allowed the United States to station troops on its soil. As the Cold War reached its peak, a mutual defense pact was signed and the United States built communications facilities to relay a "Voice of America" signal throughout the continent.

Unfortunately, the progress that Liberia made over the years has been spoiled by over a decade of civil war. The war has claimed the lives of 300,000 people, and has recently intensified, causing a humanitarian disaster on a large scale. A half of the population has been forced to flee their homes. Disease, death and destruction have become everyday elements of Liberian life.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues in the House will agree that immediate action is imperative in Liberia. Every day that we delay intervention, more lives are lost. The people of Liberia call out for our help. We have a moral obligation to act. Plans for a multinational peacekeeping force led by the United States in conjuncture with troops from the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States have been suggested. I am pleased to note that the President announced this morning that the United States will be positioning our military forces off the coast of Liberia to begin the process of assisting in this situation. My only hope is that this offer of assistance will soon be translated into practical concrete aid.

Let us give the people of Liberia something to celebrate this Independence Day. Let us help this great people recover the liberty from which their country takes its name. Let Liberia live!

IN RECOGNITION OF DIANE FURNAS, NEWLY ELECTED CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL CREDIT UNIONS

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Diane Furnas, chief executive officer of Southwest Airlines Federal Credit Union in Dallas, TX. Ms. Furnas has recently been elected Chairwoman of the Board of the National Association of Federal Credit Unions (NAFCU).

Ms. Furnas' dedication to the credit union movement is illustrated by her thirty years of service to the credit union community, including more than 27 years in her current position as the CEO of Southwest Airlines FCU. Ms. Furnas has spent the last three years as the Vice-Chair of NAFCU and she is the first woman elected to chair the NAFCU Board.

Throughout her tenure at Southwest Airlines FCU, Ms. Furnas has worked diligently to ensure her credit union's 28,000 members have

access to high quality financial expertise. As a member of the Board at NAFCU, Ms. Furnas has been equally diligent in advocating the goals of the credit union community as a whole. From financial literacy to predatory lending and identity theft, Ms. Furnas has ensured that America's 82 million credit union members have a voice here in the nation's capitol. I am certain she will carry on that good work in her role as Chairwoman of NAFCU.

NAFCU is the only national trade association that exclusively represents the interests of America's federal credit unions and Ms. Furnas will—no doubt—serve with distinction in her new post. I would like to congratulate Ms. Furnas on her election and wish her the best of luck.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, as the House prepares to go out on recess, I leave dumbfounded by many of the actions this House has taken in these last days. Last night, this Republican led House took the first steps in the destruction of an important program whose aim is to help the children of low income parents be better prepared to succeed when they go to school and ultimately succeed in their lives. Instead of making these changes that can only hurt this program, we should have been working together, regardless of party, to strengthen a program that has served so many children so well for almost forty years. Many in this House talk a great game about being "Compassionate Conservatives". What they did last night to Head Start was neither.

If this was the only mistake we were going to make this week, it would be one thing. Yet today, this House is poised to step up its attack on the lives and hopes of our most precious resource, the young people of this country. President Bush often speaks about the need to expand another program that directly benefits many of our younger constituents. That program is AmeriCorps.

President Bush often speaks about his respect and devotion to the concept of national service. Indeed in his last two State of the Union addresses and in numerous speeches around the country, this president has urged Americans to devote time and energy to community projects. In issuing this challenge he pledged his best efforts to expand government programs of national service.

It is difficult to understand how the main instrument of such service—the AmeriCorps program—could possibly be allowed to shrink on his watch. Indeed, the program is wildly popular among many local and faith-based agencies that often place AmeriCorps workers to help organize and coordinate local volunteers. We know that governors and mayors of both parties praise AmeriCorps daily. When President Bush was Governor Bush he often praised AmeriCorps.

Yet today, this House will be asked to approve a supplemental spending package that contains no additional funding for AmeriCorps. I wonder why President Bush has not used his

leadership skills to convince his Republican colleagues that having a vibrant, properly funded AmeriCorps is indeed vital to our national interest.

If these two actions were not bad enough, today we will vote on a bill that dramatically skimps on programs for Americans who have answered our country's call to arms, our proud veterans. We should never break our promises to veterans. This VA-HUD Appropriations bill will not meet our veterans' needs. Its increase from last year is \$1.4 billion, and does not even keep pace with hospital inflation or the growth in the numbers of veterans enrolled.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my fellow Americans know that an average of 200,000 veterans are forced to wait six months or more for an appointment at Veterans Administration hospitals. Some even die before they get to see a doctor. A new report, released by the American Legion this month reminds this Congress that veterans are waiting six months or more for medical care, as the overburdened Veterans Affairs health system fails to keep pace with an ever growing demand. All members of this House should be ashamed to face veterans when we return to our districts for considering this awful budget for our veterans.

Even the President's own Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans acknowledged the problem, stating "there is persistent concern about the inability of VA to provide care to enrolled veterans . . ."

The President's Task Force also noted that "the Federal Government has been more ambitious in authorizing veteran access to health care than it has been in providing the funding necessary to match declared intentions."

The VA-HUD bill that we will consider today contains a very disappointing but not surprising outcome for housing programs. Appropriators assert that if anyone is to blame it is HUD for an inadequate request, but Congress approved the budget request after hearing from advocates that the Department's request was inadequate.

This bill provides inadequate funding to address rising housing costs and the increasing number of low income people who are unable to afford a home. Funding for the Housing Choice Voucher program will not fully fund all vouchers currently in use. Two of the President's much-touted initiatives were not fully funded: The American Dream Downpayment initiative received only \$125 million of the \$200 million the President had requested, and his Samaritan Housing Initiative received no funding at all.

While public housing programs would receive slightly more than what the President requested we know that the funding needed for capital needs remains wholly inadequate, given the \$20 billion estimated backlog in capital needs.

I am happy that the HOME production and rental assistance program was increased by \$77 million from last year's funding level. Unfortunately, the committee lacked the funds needed to match the Administration's request of \$2.2 billion, instead funding the program at \$2.064 billion.

Mr. Speaker, in this time of increasing unemployment and economic turmoil, more people need our help in making certain that they have the opportunity to live in a home they can afford. Yet for some reason, this House is

unwilling to face reality and provide adequate funding to address this nation's housing needs.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is time for Congress to adjourn for the August recess. This way we can be assured that this Republican led House will not be able to inflict anymore of its "Compassionate Conservatism" on America.

Sadly, President Bush's promises to America are just talk, not action. He should be ashamed.

HONORING FRED MACHADO

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Fernando "Fred" Machado for being selected as this year's Ag One Foundation Community Salute honoree. An event will be held in his honor on Saturday, August 23rd in Easton, California.

The Ag One Foundation was formed more than twenty years ago to raise funds to provide scholarships and grants for the CSUF College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology. California Dairies is the naming sponsor of the event honoring Fred. The funds will be used to create an endowment in Machado's name, giving priority to students coming from the dairy industry.

Fred began as a tenant farmer and agricultural laborer during his early years. He now operates a 1,500-cow dairy and 730-acre farming operation that includes almonds, grapes, prunes and field crops. Machado is known for his long and devoted service to California agriculture which is why he was chosen for this honor. Through his work Fred has shown vigor and allegiance to agriculture, his community, and his country.

Machado has been given many honors and awards for his commitment to agricultural causes. He was appointed to serve on the USDA's Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee during the Regan Administration where he worked with committee members on major trade agreement negotiations. Fred received the Distinguished Service Award from both the California Farm Bureau Federation and the Fresno County Farm Bureau. Machado has also received recognition for his service on the boards of directors of the National Milk Producers Federation, Challenge Dairy, and Danish Creamy.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Fred Machado for his lifelong commitment to agriculture and his community. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Fred many years of continued success.

INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN SAFETY ACT OF 2003

HON. ROB SIMMONS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, since colonial days, Stonington Borough has been tied to fishing. Today it is the home to Connecticut's

only commercial fishing fleet, and I am proud to be its congressional representative.

Commercial fishing continues to rank as one of the most hazardous occupations in America. According to the United States Coast Guard and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the annual fatality rate for commercial fishermen is about 150 deaths per 100,000 workers.

In order to increase the level of safety in the fishing industry, the U.S. Coast Guard require all fishing vessels to carry safety equipment. Required equipment can include a life raft that automatically inflates and floats free should the vessel sink; personal flotation devices or immersion suits; Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRB); visual distress signals; and fire extinguishers.

When an emergency arises, safety equipment is priceless. At all other times, the cost of purchasing or maintaining life rafts, immersion suits, and EPIRBs must compete with other expenses such as loan payments, fuel, wages, maintenance, and insurance. Meeting all of these obligations is made more difficult by a regulatory framework that uses measures such as trip limits, days at sea, and gear alterations to manage our marine resources.

Commercial fishermen should not have to choose between safety equipment and other expenses. That's why I am introducing the "Commercial Fishermen Safety Act of 2003," which would provide for a tax credit equal to 75 percent of the amount paid by fishermen to purchase or maintain required safety equipment. The tax credit is capped at \$1,500 and includes expenses paid or incurred for maintenance of safety equipment required by federal regulation. Sens. Susan Collins (R-ME) and John Kerry (D-MA) have introduced identical legislation in the Senate.

The Commercial Fishermen Safety Act of 2003 could improve safety by giving commercial fishermen more of an incentive to purchase and care for safety equipment. I ask my colleagues to join me in helping commercial fishermen protect themselves while doing their jobs.

URGING FCC TO ADOPT NEUTRAL COMPETITION RULES

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. REYES. Speaker, since the passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the cable industry has invested more than \$75 billion of private risk capital nationally, or about \$1,000 per customer. These investments—including \$45 million by Time Warner Cable in the Sixteenth District of Texas alone—have transformed cable's one-way video delivery system into a two-way interactive digital platform that offers consumers new competitive services—digital video, high-speed Internet access, cable telephony, and interactive and high-definition television.

Competition for residential high-speed Internet is here. Consumers today can choose among a variety of wireless and wire line providers. Cable's lead in the marketplace is due to its early investment in cable modem technology, aggressive marketing, generally lower prices and a consistently positive online experience for customers. I am proud that when

Time Warner Cable launched Road Runner high-speed online service in El Paso in 1998, it was the first Road Runner launch in Texas, and the eighth in the nation. Time Warner provides free cable modems to the schools and libraries in its communities, as do many cable operators, ensuring that our young people benefit directly, even if they do not have access to computers at home. Cable is a proactive player in the effort to address the Digital Divide.

Cable was the first industry to aggressively upgrade its networks to offer broadband Internet access to consumers at home, thereby creating the first real alternative to the much slower dial-up modem systems offered by local phone companies. Cable's rapid deployment of its always-on, high-speed Internet product spurred phone companies to offer competing DSL technology, a broadband data technology that was invented over a decade ago.

Cable has taken an early lead in the investment and marketing of cable service, but there are a number of other providers in the broadband marketplace. Consumers today have access to an expanding choice of broadband providers, including wireless, satellite and alternative broadband suppliers.

According to a March 2003 report in Cable Datacom News, the cable modem and DSL residential customer total reached approximately 16.7 million in the U.S. at the end of 2002, out of an estimated 105 million who have access to broadband service. Of the 15 percent of residential customers currently purchasing wireline broadband service, approximately 67.4 percent are cable modem customers and 32.6 percent are DSL customers. Others purchase broadband service from providers of fixed wireless, satellite or other technologies. Every broadband provider has the same ability and opportunity to sell service to the remaining, large group of untapped potential customers and need not take a customer from another provider in order to gain one.

I urge the FCC to adopt rules that ensure the existence of true, head to head facilities-based competition for all types of communications services, especially voice telephony and broadband.

HONORING MERYL FEREN

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Meryl Feren, a great Floridian, a caring wife and mother, and a charitable activist. Originally from Bronx, NY, Mrs. Feren moved to Sunrise, FL in 1980 and soon began a noted career in business and charity services.

Mrs. Feren, the wife of current Sunrise Mayor Steve Feren, made an indelible impression upon the South Florida community. The couple first met while studying at Queens College in New York City, and soon married and moved to South Florida. Since arriving to Sunrise, Meryl Feren started a successful mortgage-foreclosure research business. Her business expertise and ability to work with others garnered her the respect of many in the business community.